

July 30, 2013
Human Services Interim Committee

My name is April Fairfield and I am the Executive Director of the Head Injury Association of North Dakota. On behalf of the Association, we sincerely appreciate the Legislature recognizing the need for a comprehensive study of Traumatic brain injury.

TBI is a misunderstood, misdiagnosed, and often overlooked public health problem in our state and nation. Therefore, one of the TBI community's biggest challenges is making others aware of brain trauma and its effects. This kind of exposure and, hopefully, the dialogue and recommendations that result from this interim committee will help us move in the direction of greater awareness and understanding.

The Head Injury Association of North Dakota is primarily an advocacy organization whose mission is to raise awareness about head injury, support public policies that enhance the TBI system of care in North Dakota and provide resources and tools in order to enhance the quality of life for individuals and their families who have been affected by head injuries.

What is a TBI?

Each year, traumatic brain injuries (TBI) contribute to substantial number of deaths and cases of permanent disability. A TBI is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. The severity of a TBI may range from "mild" (a brief change in mental status or consciousness) to "severe" (an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury).

- TBI affects all people, crossing age groups, gender, and social categories.
- Each year, an estimated 1.7 million people sustain a TBI annually.
- TBI is a contributing factor to a third of all injury-related deaths in the United States.
- Costs associated with TBI are staggering at over \$80 billion per year in the U.S. alone.
- TBI is the leading cause of death and disability among youth and young adults.

What is the Prevalence of TBI in North Dakota?

The estimated impact of TBI on North Dakota based on Centers for Disease Control Surveillance

Data:

- Each year in North Dakota an estimated **3,693** individuals sustain a TBI.
- Of those 111 die
- 602 are admitted to the hospital
- 2,980 are treated in the emergency room and released.
- An estimated **13,000** North Dakotans are living with a long-term disability due to TBI.

Who is the Head Injury Association?

Beginning in 2009 HIAND has been able to increase services to individuals impacted by TBI through services that include informal supports, educational trainings, awareness outreach, and peer mentoring services. Our current HIAND activities include:

Informal Supports for Individuals

- Includes referral assistance; provide educational materials, and assistance with accessing services.

Peer Mentoring Program

- Effort connects TBI constituents and their families with a trained mentor, who may have gone through similar experiences personally, and who is available to offer informal support for those affected by the injury.

Educational Events and Trainings

Trainings

HIAND provides trainings to anyone interested in learning about brain injury or prevention of brain injury across North Dakota.

Mind Matter Conference

HIAND sponsors an annual TBI conference that focuses on trainings, medical information, CEUs for nurses and social workers and has in the past and will continue to focus on the unique needs of veterans, as well. Hundreds of individuals, family members, and professionals have attended these events in recent years.

Conference Exhibiting

HIAND exhibits at regional and statewide conferences

Information Dissemination

Mailings

HIAND has done informational mailings to schools, medical facilities, social services, and social clubs to increase awareness of available services and offer trainings.

Website

The HIAND Website has had over 2500 unique visitors since going live in November of 2010.

Newsletter

The newsletter is distributed quarterly; with valuable information related to the association and TBI to more than 200 email addresses.

*All HIAND services provided by the Association are free of charge.

What Additional Services do North Dakotans with TBI Need?

Housing for those with TBI

Substance Abuse Treatment specifically geared to those with TBI

REGISTRY: North Dakota had a registry several years ago. We would like this re-implemented.